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THE NEW EUROPEAN ORDER:
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES AND
PROSPECTS FOR AN ITALIAN ROLE

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY
AFFAIRS**

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
June, 1992

Unclassified
Security Classification of this page

REPORTS DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Report Security Classification UNCLASSIFIED		1b Restrictive Markings	
Security Classification Authority		3 Distribution Availability of Report Approved for public release: distribution is unlimited	
Declassification/Downgrading Schedule		5 Monitoring Organization Report Number(s)	
Name of Performing Organization Naval Postgraduate School	6b Office Symbol (If Applicable) NS	7a Name of Monitoring Organization Naval Postgraduate School	
Address (city, state, and ZIP code) Monterey, CA 93943-5000		7b Address (city, state, and ZIP code) Monterey, CA 93943-5000	
Name of Funding/ Sponsoring Organization	8b Office Symbol (If Applicable)	9 Procurement Instrument Identification Number	
Address (city, state, and ZIP code)		10 Source of Funding Numbers	
Program Element Number	Project No.	Task	Work Unit Accession No.
Title (Include Security Classification) THE NEW EUROPEAN ORDER: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES AND PROSPECTS FOR AN ITALIAN ROLE			
Personal Author(s) Ghiorse, Anthony, M.			
Type of Report Thesis	13b Time Covered From To	14 Date of Report (year, month, day) 1992 June	15 Page count 72
Supplementary Notation The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government			
Cosati Codes:	Field	Group	Subgroup
Subject Terms (continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) European security, Italian foreign policy, Italian post-war history, Italo-Soviet relations, Italian policy in the Mediterranean			
Abstract (continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) This thesis begins by examining the history of Italian participation in Europe's southern flank since 1945, focusing upon the reasons for its apparent weakness in taking a leading role. It then considers Italy's present posture within the new European order and attempts to make informed judgements as to the course of its role in European security. Europe has had two restructurings in recent history. This thesis examines the development of Italian statecraft after the first changes in 1945 to see if anything can be gleaned and applied to Italy's posture after the changes in 1991.			
Distribution/Availability of Abstract Unclassified/unlimited same as report DTIC users		21 Abstract Security Classification Unclassified	
Name of Responsible Individual Donald Abenheim		22b Telephone (Include Area Code) 408 646-2228	22c Office Symbol NS

FROM 1473, 84 MAR 83 APR edition may be used until exhausted security classification of this page
All other editions are obsolete Unclassified

ABSTRACT

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I. INTRODUCTION

This analysis will examine the history of Italy's participation in NATO and Europe's southern flank since 1946 in order to reach informed judgments about Italy's probable future role in European security.

After World War II many West European leaders realized that security in Europe would best be obtained through an alliance structure. The consensus of these leaders was that the Soviet Union was now emerging as not only the most powerful European nation but also a threat to Western democracies. The alliances formed against the Axis powers in World War II were fine examples of the synergistic effect of collective defense. A new alliance would now emerge from that example.

From late in 1947 and through 1948 the question of Italian membership in NATO raised the issue of what NATO's basic strategy should be based upon. Some European leaders, notably the British, opposed Italy's inclusion in the Alliance because they regarded the Mediterranean country as susceptible to Communist subversion, as well as being outside the alliance's original geographical and strategic focus. [Ref. 1]

There was originally no thought as to a "southern flank" for NATO. Although the North Atlantic Treaty was originally intended to be strictly a north Atlantic pact, Italy's

strategic geography was deemed important enough to include Italy to help guard the Alliance's south-east region. It was this same strategic geography which brought Turkey into the Alliance and with it a stronger control over the straits to the Black Sea. [Ref. 2] Italy's eventual inclusion was indeed important with the possibility of an Italian Communist Party victory in the 1948 elections. [Ref. 3]

Italy indeed desired to be an equal partner but its early government was too weak to assert a strong foreign policy. The Italian population was also leery of strong government which moved too fast. This resulted in Italy beginning the new European order after World War II as a passive participant. For decades, geographic position has been Italy's biggest contribution to the Alliance's southern flank. This has been true for both land based nuclear systems as well as forward-deployed American military forces. With the formation of NATO in 1949, and Italy's participation in it, the U.S. felt the Mediterranean region could be stabilized while also demonstrating Western resistance to Communist influence. [Ref. 4]

The development of the Cold War between the East and West brought into focus the importance of keeping strategic countries like Italy within NATO. Viewing the Italian Communists as tools of Soviet foreign policy, the United States sought to weaken their influence in the labor movement

by bolstering the Christian Democratic party as a countering force.

Most of Italy's relationship within NATO has been bilateral with the United States. The U.S. encouraged Italy to develop into a strong, stable democratic nation; but Italy's weak coalition government, and its unique political-military culture, may have resulted in Italy not taking on a leading role within NATO and having most of its security policy set outside its borders by more influential members of the Atlantic Alliance. The revision of the Peace Treaty in the autumn of 1947 completed the transformation of Italy from its role as a defeated enemy in a world war into a full partner within the Western European community. It was then that the Italians had the chance to become a significant power within the Alliance, but they did not do so. This thesis will show how Italy had no real external constraints, as did post-war Germany, but was hindered by its unique political system. Even with its strong economic recovery within Europe, Italy continues to take a following role. With the recent sweeping changes in Europe, can they now emerge from their relatively weak position to be a leader in Europe's southern flank?

There has been growing assertiveness in Italian foreign and defense policy, reflecting a natural desire for a new international role. This uncharacteristic activism in security issues makes it difficult to predict the course of Italian policy. Can the Italians take a leading role in the

definition of a security policy? Will this policy be based on more of a pan-European alliance or will Italy, as well as other nations fracture off and develop a southern alliance? To what extent can the Italians surmount their historical formations and pursue more autonomous policies?

Some experts observe that, historically, Italian politicians have been more concerned with image than any real decision-making. The government appears to be in a perpetual state of political crisis and is characterized by the power struggle among the Christian Democrats, Communists, Liberals and Socialists, with the deterioration of legitimacy a significant problem.

With the current fall of Communist power in the East, many questions need to be addressed concerning security in the new Europe. The future of NATO itself is under question. Negotiations are currently under way to reorganize NATO's structure and to determine its role in meeting the new challenges. At the same time there is ongoing dialogue to increase the EC's influence over political, economic, defense and foreign policy. It will be interesting to see what level of participation the Italians will take and whether that role will be within a NATO framework or be centered upon a more Western European defense policy.

This paper will include the very important collapse of the Communist East Bloc and the implications for Italy. With Italy's unique political-military background and its

relatively subservient historical role within NATO, will Italy be a partner of increased responsibility within a restructured NATO and guard its southern flank? Will the Italians respond to the new threats posed by the Eastern Bloc with their own internally developed security policy, or will Italy once again stand in solidarity and take policy direction from an alliance?

The methodology of this paper will be to begin by examining the history of Italian participation within Europe's southern flank, focusing upon the reasons for the apparent weakness they have had taking a leading role. It will then consider Italy's present posture within the new European order and attempt to make informed judgments as to the course of its role in European security. Europe has been restructured twice in recent history. This thesis will examine Italy after the first change of 1946 and see if anything can be gleaned about Italy's posture after the changes in 1991.

II. HISTORICAL ASPECTS

A. SECURITY AFTER WORLD WAR II

It would be most difficult to examine present Italian policy without a clear understanding of how its unique position was formed. After World War II, Italy launched upon a totally new political start. The new government was made up of many political leaders from the pre-Mussolini era, although a fair amount stayed on after the demise of the fascist regime. The most notable politician from the pre-fascist period was Alcide De Gasperi. He was the leading figure in early post-war politics but was the leader of the Catholic Popular Party in the early 1920 when Benito Mussolini forced him to resign.

It is interesting to note that other Italian political figures also reemerged from a period of dormancy to contend for post-war power in Italy. The vintage liberals, Orlando & Nitti, who represented Italy at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 were back in Rome as was the early Italian Communist Party leader, Togliatti. So although a new period for Italy was beginning, it would be marked at first by a continuation of a political conflict which began in 1919 and was only postponed by Mussolini's period of control. [Ref. 5] The reemerging conflict was to be one which would stay a part

of Italian politics until very recently, that being the conflict for control within the government between the Italian Communists and the coalition of the right.

Post-war Italy was dominated by a longer period of under-development and economic stagnation than other West European nations. Many of Italy's industries and much of its industrial capacity which had been built up were destroyed by the allies. The devastating results were seen in areas such as iron and steel production, which were down by 90%. With a high illiteracy rate and much of the population employed by agriculture, the Italian Communist Party (PCI) took a strong foothold and Italian politics would be marked by contradiction for decades.

B. FORMING AN ALLIANCE

The results of Italy's first election were indicative of the political diversity facing the nation. In June of 1946, Italians voted a governing body with a majority made up of Christian Democrats with 35%, Socialists with 21% and Communists holding 19%. Both the Italian Communist Party and the Socialist Party could trace their origins to revolutionary Marxism. They diverged after the Russian Revolution but later realized this division would hamper each other's progress; therefore they decided to cooperate more closely in the post-1945 era. It was apparent to the Italians, as well as to Western leadership, that Communist expansion was threatening

to cause an ideological showdown in Italy and the Communist strength would have to be appropriately dealt with.

In 1947 the United States took the position that not only should the West fear an outright war with the Soviets, but there was an equal threat of Communist subversion undermining West European democracies. Italy stood out as one European nation which appeared to be an example of this type of threat. Three areas of concern were addressed by the United States. The first would be to protect Western European governments from internal subversion by communist parties. The second interest was to protect against an all-out Soviet invasion, and the third was to build an aura of credibility and solidarity within Europe so that economic recovery could get a strong start. [Ref. 6]

Late in 1947 as negotiations began in Northern Europe to consider a North Atlantic Treaty, Italy would emerge as a significant question as to what the Alliance's strategic posture would be. The United States became deeply involved in the Italian question. The American goal was to integrate Italy into the negotiations of a Western Alliance. The British at first objected to Italian inclusion, stating that the Mediterranean nation was outside the proposed charter of the North Atlantic Treaty. [Ref. 7]

C. POWERS WITHIN NATO

In 1948, the National Security Council also saw the Communist threat in Italy but had an added concern over preserving sea lines of communication in the Mediterranean. The council saw Italy's geographic location as strategic on this point. The NSC recommended using all possible influence to keep Italy from becoming dominated by the Soviets directly or indirectly through the Soviet-influenced Italian Communist Party. [Ref. 8] What developed soon after this was a constant, strong involvement by the United States to support Italian democracy and to bolster southern flank security. Italy would be the devoted follower in this bilateral relationship which has marked Italian security policy even until the present time. [Ref. 9]

The United States' assistance originally came in the form of support for the Christian Democrats and their Prime Minister, Alcide De Gasperi. The U.S. saw membership in the Brussels Pact as a vehicle to get Italy into the North Atlantic Alliance. In the period of February-April 1948, Secretary of State George Marshall and John Foster Dulles lobbied heavily with West European nations to invite De Gasperi and the Italians to join the pact with the ultimate objective of North Atlantic Treaty participation. [Ref. 10] The Italians wanted to be included in a defense pact, and the Christian Democrats urged the Italians not to stand alone but to be included.

D. THE ITALIAN ROLE

The April 1948 Italian elections placed the Christian Democrats on top. The controlling coalition parties to-the-right excluded the PCI from participation in the government. The coalition government sought U.S. support, knowing that this would guarantee aid if the Soviets showed a tough hand in Italy.

The United States suggested that it was not interested in entering the Brussels Pact alone and once again gave Italy support for inclusion. Most European countries, except France, still rejected Italy's inclusion on the grounds that it was too big of a threat by being unstable, and outside of the realm of the pact. They were still not convinced that Italy would be a strong democracy and also that the Communist party was too strong. These countries also did not see many southern threats but instead felt the Central Front was paramount.

France did not see it quite the same and demanded Italian participation. France also had a strong communist party and many colonial interests and desired a viable southern flank defense. In the Treaty of Brussels, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands committed themselves to a common defense. These West Europeans soon realized their combined military forces would not be strong enough to

counter the Soviet threat without help from the United States.

[Ref. 11]

The U.S., not wanting to have Italy isolated, moved on to endorse Italian membership in the North Atlantic Treaty. After months of intense negotiations over membership, Italy was invited to join and later became a charter member of NATO on April 4, 1949. The admittance into the Alliance forged the strong statement that Italy was now aligned with Western ideology.

By showing US and European resolve to bolster Italian democracy, Italy would now have the opportunity to grow economically while also being a strategic link in Western defense. Italy became somewhat of an unwilling player in the Cold War of ideology between East and West. Any internal subversion by the PCI would be thought of as Soviet motivated and would be addressed quickly by Western forces.

In closing this first chapter of Italy's post-war history, it appears that Italy actually saw less of a military threat from the Soviets than did other Westerners. The Italians saw the threat as internal in the form of the PCI. The Soviets too, originally saw little threat from Italy until it became an integral part of the West. They would not fear Italy so much as they would fear Italy's friends. This, of course, was the perception desired by NATO.

It is important to keep in mind that Italy is one of the

younger countries in Europe. Its geographic unification only took place a little over one hundred years ago and its political system has been operating since 1946. Italian leadership does not benefit from long-standing tradition or stability. The early leadership after World War II took a very conservative posture. Italy's population appeared not to trust big government and it could only tolerate change at a very slow pace. This passive approach was due in part to reaction to the fresh memories of Mussolini's military adventurism which brought great defeat. This hesitation, coupled with an ineffective post war government, resulted in Italy defining its security policy in terms of NATO requirements.

The growing dependence upon the United States also influenced the foreign policy of Italy by never allowing it to become independent in NATO's southern flank; a position it deserved. While American leaders wanted Italy to take a firmer stand in the development of foreign policy, Italian statecraft just never materialized. The strong anti-Soviet course enforced rigid restrictions on Italian attempts at policy formation and internal activities within the political sphere were controlled. In retrospect, it is amazing that a foreign country, such as the United States, could be so dominating over Italy for an extended period of time. Such was the case, because Washington saw a tremendous threat of Communist subversion and security in the Mediterranean. It

also perceived an inability on Italy's part to deal with these threats effectively.

With the Cold War beginning between the East and West, it was important for the involved superpowers to strategically organize their surrogate nations early and try to hold ground. During the decades of tensions Italy fulfilled three missions for NATO. First was its southern air-land defense net, second is Italy's cooperation in Mediterranean Naval operations, and last is its loyal deployment of US nuclear forces.

E. SOVIET INFLUENCE IN ITALIAN DEVELOPMENT

Any speculation on the future must take into account the historical conditions of the past. Italy's rebirth after 1945 was severely influenced by the emerging superpower struggle in a bipolar world. To review Italo-Soviet relations one must reflect back to post World War II developments. The Soviet Union emerged from a World War II ally into an opponent of Western democracy and ideology. It was then, in the late 1940s, that Europe was divided into two camps with an unnatural border being drawn down Central Europe from the Baltic to the Adriatic Sea with Italy near the border. The West's immediate answer to the perceived Soviet threat was the North Atlantic Alliance.

Italy had virtually no effective government in the immediate post war period. There was an immediate threat of strong Communist rule in Italy. With the help of the United

States, the Christian Democrats took a controlling interest in Italy and the Constitution of the Republic of Italy was proclaimed in January 1948. With the strongest Communist party in the west (the PCI) Italian politics was marked by contradiction.

Italy's strategic geography was deemed important enough, with the Cold War looming, to include it as a safeguard to the Alliance's south-east region as well as a means of showing West European and U.S. resolve to bolster Italy's internal struggle for democracy. With the earlier Communist gains in Yugoslavia, the help came just in time as the PCI rallied for control in the 1948 Italian elections. The vote came to a choice of camps with the Christian Democrats, and its Atlantic Alliance, acquiring control.

Next to Germany, Italy would be the second most important country for communist showdowns and East-West struggle. Unfortunately, Italy's internal political struggles would keep it from developing its own security policy for decades; Italy relied upon NATO for strategic security while a perpetual debate of ideology went on in Rome. Italy's divided government has been debating the superpower struggle, and how it has effected their development, but they appear to spend most of their time talking about it with no action. This has been one of the most important factors keeping Italy from developing a strong foreign policy.

In retrospect, the first years of Italy's alliance with the West furnished the basis for its eventual firm stand against total control by the Soviet sphere. The west was able to "jump start" the cold war within Italy, but Italians seemed to have enough fuel in the early post war years to keep some conflict with the Soviets going. Two such distractions were, uneven war reparations and the Soviet support for Yugoslavia's Trieste claims.

The Soviets had hoped for a more amiable rapport with Italy and a freer hand. The West's quick moves in Italy appeared successful and Stalin saw his maneuvering room tightened in this first phase of Italo-Soviet relations.

Early Soviet policy was based upon Stalin's belief that Europe should be dominated by the Soviet Union after World War II. Although he agreed at Yalta to divide Europe and retain a Soviet sphere of influence in the East, he would later submit that Italy and Western Europe were "European" concerns, not US ones, and should come under the influence of his system.

Stalin and other Soviet leaders were constantly annoyed at the United States' influence on the European continent. This constant irritation drove the Soviets from one foreign policy to another in an attempt to "shake" Western European nations like Italy free of reliance on the US. The Soviets had focused their policies to reflect their goal of delegitimizing NATO and Western alliances. They have done this in several

effective ways. First, they have undermined the credibility of nuclear deterrence by promoting bilateral nuclear weapons reductions in Europe between the United States and the USSR. Gorbachev and Reagan both advocated the elimination of nuclear weapons and declared that nuclear war cannot be won, so should not be waged. The INF Treaty helped to give credibility to Gorbachev's position. Secondly, the Soviets have consistently tried to erode existing security arrangements between western allies. Bilateral incentives with the USSR were used to draw each member away from a western alliance. This could be argued as only marginally successful because although countries like Italy used these incentives to negotiate favorable trade and security treaties, western alliances have not dissolved. Although, these tactics have been successful in gaining support of an "Equidistancing" in Italy and the rest of Western Europe. [Ref. 12]

Even up until their demise the Soviets had long envisioned NATO's weakness to be political. To attack this weak point would be to undermine the western coalition and hopefully decrease it's military effectiveness. [Ref. 13] A more advanced possibility of this theme might be to pressure southern flank states, like Italy, to opt out of the Alliance to preserve their country once a conflict begins on the central front. This offer to keep a country from being effected by nuclear weapons was very inviting. Soviet propaganda would play up the United States' role of causing

the crisis and show how the US would also escalate the conflict.

The policy of "peaceful coexistence" designed by Khrushchev in the early 1960s focused upon the international struggle between Capitalism and Socialism. The Soviets embarked upon a program of delegitimizing the West's capitalistic position and reinforcing the gains of socialism without having their opponents take up arms. This new program resulted in the Soviets building their foreign policy upon the concept of peaceful coexistence with competing systems around the world. [Ref. 14] The PCI as well as the Socialists in Italy warmed up to this type of policy resulting in a continued political struggle within the coalition government.

The Soviets would provide peaceful conditions for the building of world socialism. It was an accepted belief in the East that with this policy, the war of ideology, politics and economies would be won. Soviet propaganda sought to show that war was a tool of Imperialism and that Western Europeans should ease the threat of war by leaving the Western Alliance to deal with the Soviet Union bilaterally. Of course, the Soviet leadership believed that delegitimizing the Western Alliance and dealing with West European nations one at a time would be a way of expanding Soviet control and neutralizing United States influence.

Their policy of peaceful coexistence did not mean no violence. Anything short of inciting full military action was acceptable. This meant that salami tactics, political revolution and coups were tactics of choice. Italy would be the recipient of all these tactics. Their "minor wars" were to be fought from within each country to give the appearance of an internal struggle against Capitalism. The Soviet policies were not totally effective in Italy. By the late 1950s it was becoming obvious that the political instability which was first a Communist goal, was now actually hindering development of both a democracy as well as a social state.

There is no special slant to Italo-Soviet relations with regard to foreign policy. The Soviets saw few threats from the Italians themselves. But being Western and part of NATO were the most significant threats. Soviet policy toward the West has been to divide and influence. The Italians saw more of an ideological war, never feeling the military threat as did other westerners. This may have been because of Italy's acceptance of a large Communist party within its system. The Italians, more than any other Western nation, has had the most direct contact with the Communist Party.

Bilateral relations between Italians and Russians continue to be good. The major threat from Communism which Italy had faced up until the Soviet break-up had not been an external one of Soviet origin but an internal threat by the Italian Communist Party (PCI). The Italian Communists have to date

not been allowed to participate in the governing coalition leadership in Italy but have, until recently, held approximately 35% of the local vote. They gained legitimacy when they abandoned their anti-NATO policy in the 1970s and moved "right" in an unsuccessful effort to seek governing cabinet posts.

They have always reaffirmed their separate path of Italian Socialism and became at odds with Moscow after the suppression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956 and later in 1979 when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Italian PCI lost most of its funding as well as most of its popular support in Italy. It has shrunk to a fraction of its former size and has attempted to align itself with the Right by casting off its "Communist" name in favor of a more conservative sounding "Democratic Party of the Left." One would think that Italy's once divided government would now become strong. As will be explained, this appears not to be the case, for even now more parties are springing up in Italy to once again dilute the controlling coalition. An example of the continued instability is the fact that Italy went without a national government from the elections on April 5, 1992 until the end of May.

[Ref. 15]

The Soviets attempted to draw legitimacy away from NATO and U.S. influence. They used several methods over the decades to achieve this but had little success. When

Gorbachev came to power in March of 1985, he brought with him a new reformist course for his country. He revised the old views and brought in a new era of cooperation with flexible foreign policy. These new changes helped in eventually bringing a collapse of Communism and a reduction of East-West tension.

Gorbachev, as well as other Soviet leaders, desired to reduce the U.S. influence in the southern flank and strengthen the Soviet position. A series of mini-summits ensued whereby Gorbachev sought to align with each West European country bilaterally. What appeared successful on the surface proved unsuccessful under closer examination. The Western system of alliance was just as strong as ever, being inherently designed to be strong against an influential Soviet Union. The North Atlantic Alliance was specifically designed to meet the Soviet threat and was directly responsible for its demise; a successful track record indeed. The West stood strong in solidarity long enough for the communist system to crumble under its own weight.

There is a widespread perception in Italy that the Cold War has been over for several years. It is believed that the emerging era will stress economic and political factors and military power will only be of secondary concern. If politics and economics are paramount in a new Europe, Italy sees the opportunity to emerge into a new leadership role in East-West relations. There is a sense that Italy can now be recognized

by utilizing its economic assets and be a player in an arena which was previously reserved for Alliance members with higher military stature. Italy seeks a leading role in negotiations with Moscow on the basis of being a flexible nation with a unique position and ability to facilitate cooperation which no other West European country can accomplish. The Italian leadership feels that now is the time for Europeans to move to the front seat of East-West negotiations. Italy's Prime Minister, Andreotti, has suggested in early 1992 that it is up to the Europeans to conduct dialogue with the Soviet Union.

It is no secret that Italy has been more concerned with economic issues than political ones. Despite the years of faithful alliance in the West, the Italian private sector has been very active in pursuing investment initiatives in the Soviet Union. Both Fiat and ENI (Italy's energy giant) have sought investment and trade within the Eastern Bloc with ENI seeking large amounts of Soviet natural gas and electricity.

Italy currently ranks second behind Germany in the value of its direct investment in the Soviet Union with growth continuing well above that of the other West European nations. [Ref. 16] Italy believes that it can make a unique contribution to detente by exploiting all possible avenues of economic relations with the East. This is, of course, a worthwhile proposition because most of the former Eastern Bloc, especially the former Soviet Union, are in the midst of economic collapse.

Italy, with its history of favorable economic relations with East Europe, is in a very good position to help negotiate East-West cooperation. Gianni De Michelis, Italy's Foreign Minister, sees economic recovery not coming quick enough in Central and Eastern Europe and advocates bringing these countries into the EC with eventual full membership possible in an alliance. [Ref. 17]

The deterioration of Communist rule in Eastern Europe and the subsequent threat reduction has spurred the United States to withdraw troops and support from Europe. With this drastic change in U.S. policy, Italians will gravitate toward a common European defense. Along with the other West European countries, Italy will need to reassess its security policy and its position within the Atlantic Alliance and the European Community.

At present it appears that a Franco-German defense coalition may be the best base for building a common European defense. Although Italy supports an indigenous European defense endeavor, it is uncomfortable about allowing it to be solely a Franco-German collaboration and fear that the south will be isolated. Italy proposes that a leaner NATO could continue to protect Europe from external threats while the EC defense pillar could handle all other types of security concerns. [Ref. 18]

It appears that the Italians are once again playing "the middle of the road." Their continued bilateral relations with

the United States keeps the hedge toward a superpower relationship and are a constant counter to and EC pillar which may not recognize Italy's leadership role. Italy has been a loyal participant in NATO, long supporting its charter and grateful for its security umbrella. It would be almost certain that any Italian European commitment would be secondary to a NATO commitment. The direction of Italy's defense posture is still somewhat fluid and apparently Italy likes it that way.

F. EUROPEAN DESTABILIZATION

Although the Soviet military threat has diminished, what now emerges is uncertainty as to the future character of the new Russian States. For example, there are multiple nuclear entities to deal with, each having the potential to be considerably more unstable than the former Soviet Union in regard to security policy. Some of the republics appear to be joining together in a commonwealth resulting in a new threat to the smaller republics. The collapse of Communist central economies has posed a major economic threat as well. Italians are concerned that too many economic assets will be spent on the reconstruction of Central and Eastern Europe. What is feared now is an economic curtain replacing the former iron one.

With the East-West conflict now reduced Italy sees many other threats coming to the fore. The Italians saw the former

East-West conflict as having a certain stability associated with it which now does not exist. Without Soviet influence, one Central-European country after another has sought sovereignty; but the road to autonomy includes many obstacles. Yugoslavia now poses a significant threat to the stability of the region with the results of its civil war spilling over into other countries. Italy has had to deal with a sizable refugee problem from Yugoslavia and Albania while also facing political instability. Italy recently has been turning refugees around and repatriating them. The Italian policy of choice is to send aid and deal with the problem at its origin within the affected area.

Another concern for Europe's southern flank is the Arab-Israeli conflict and the implications of rising radical Islamic fundamentalism in North Africa and the Mid-East. This has been a destabilizing threat within the region and the violence and terrorism is being exported to other continents. Italy continues to have strong economic and political ties with the former Eastern Bloc countries as well as with this Southern region. Italian leaders such as Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis see the opportunity to use this influence as a tool to negotiating future East-West as well as North-South security policies. [Ref. 19]

Each Western European country has peculiar political and historical factors affecting its stature within the European Community and the Atlantic Alliance.

III. ITALIAN POLICIES AND TACTICS IN THE SOUTHERN FLANK

A. ITALIAN POLITICAL INSTABILITY

It is interesting that the Communist party of Italy (PCI) one of the largest Communist entities outside Eastern Europe, was never able to take firm control of the Italian political system. Delegates of the Italian Communist Party participate in local administration and have shared power in the Parliament, but have been kept from participating in the governing coalition. [Ref. 20] Never having a controlling majority, the PCI found it difficult to directly influence Italian policy but was able to effectively disrupt progress.

Its anti-NATO stance was the PCI's biggest liability until the party took a more moderate posture. The PCI's popularity was derived in the 1970s when they became moderate and proclaimed their interest in an "historic compromise." At that time they sought an alliance with other Italian political parties and by moving right along the political spectrum, actually accepted many new policies. Most important of these was their acceptance of Italian membership in NATO and the formation of West European economic integration. As leading advocates of Eurocommunism, they became an irritant to the

Soviet Central Party. The PCI felt that a compromise was needed to gain increased legitimacy and help Italy out of its social and economic troubles.

Even with one third of the local electorate in 1986 they were still excluded from the governing coalition. In spite of compromise, the five controlling political parties to the right still felt the PCI to be a threat. The final break between the PCI and Moscow came with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This military aggression would move the PCI more toward the center and place it closer to the Socialists.

Gorbachev's reforms did nothing to reinstate a PCI-Moscow entente. With the economic barriers dividing the East and West coming down, the PCI is losing another job it once had, that of being a broker between Italian sources of capital and business leaders in Eastern Europe. With the liberal moves taking place within the East, the Italian Communist Party is being strained for a reason to exist.

Italy has a history of difficulty in defining a security policy. Any attempts have fallen in line with NATO policy. Unlike the former West Germany, which desired a national security policy and adapted it to NATO's goals, Italian security policy has run parallel with NATO's needs more by its government's default to come up with a consensus on its own. Consensus can prove difficult when a country has had a new government, on average, every eleven months since 1946.

Italy's prime minister has little influence over foreign and security policy because his office has little authority in this area. Italy has been marked with not only a weak prime minister but a weak parliament as well. In addition to this, the Defense Ministry produces obscure budgets which are not comprehensible resulting in that ministry being excluded from important public and parliamentary inquiry. [Ref. 21]

What appears paramount in Italian politics is maintaining power, which is invested in each position, with policy formation secondary. The individual's fight to maintain his stature within the system is far more important than constructing any productive legislation. [Ref. 22] Once the fundamental choice was made to align with the West, foreign policy was set. Thereafter, foreign policy would be used in domestic political debates which became so complex that the politicians devoted all their time to them.

This preoccupation with the political game resulted in key politicians, such as foreign and defense ministers, not concentrating on the proper management of their departments. This post-war Italian political system has operated until the present day. There has been a substantial loss of legitimacy in this weak governing body.

The absence of political legitimacy has driven the Italian public to a cynical attitude toward the government resulting in little interest in politics. While the names change, political life has stayed the same. Luigi Barzini explains

this phenomenon in his book The Europeans, as a concept of good impressions, but neither commitment nor responsibility at the center. It is said that Italians appear to know everything, but understand nothing.

During the 1980s, Italian defense policy was marked by a shift away from the Central Front in the north to increased threats in Mediterranean. This policy was defined in Italy's second Defense White Paper in 1985. It is interesting to note that this new shift of military concern, and a resolve to meet it head on, was developed under Prime Minister Craxi, Italy's first Socialist Party Prime Minister. Most Italian parties to the left have been known to be anti-military. It is also interesting that Craxi's government had two very different ministers making up an effective team. Andreotti was a pro-Arab and secretive Foreign Minister while the Defense Minister, Spadolini was very pro-American and pro-Israeli. The grand strategy outlined in the White Paper never fully materialized, but it was one of the first signs that the Italians were thinking independently about security on the southern flank.

The Mediterranean issue of terrorism and rising Islamic fundamentalism caused some tension between Italy and the United States. The disagreements were over Italy's preference to use mediation and negotiation in dealing with the crisis while the US was willing to resort to use of military force. The two have overcome their differences in this area since the

Bush Administration adopted a peace plan based upon diplomacy.
[Ref. 23]

B. THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDITERRANEAN SECURITY/ THE NORTH-SOUTH THREAT

With the collapse of the Communist Eastern Bloc and the changes it will bring, there develops a variety of implications for each country. As the weakest of the "Big Four" European countries in the Atlantic Alliance, Italy's position is unique. Italy's geographic location within the Mediterranean and its continued Atlantic Alliance loyalty makes it an important gatekeeper in NATO's southern flank.

The Soviets believed that dissolving the Warsaw Pact would trigger a dissolving of all the Western alliances, but this scenario appears unlikely with the current West European resolve to work within an alliance. Although Italy publicly supports an indigenous European defense plan, it plays both sides of the issue. With Italy's history of allegiance to NATO, any European defense initiative will most likely be considered secondary to participation in NATO.

There has been a marked increase in foreign involvement by Italy in the last couple of decades. These were uncharacteristic and important moves forward in Italy's quest to be a leader in foreign policy. Some examples were: involvement in UNIFIL (1979); the agreements for economic, technical and military assistance with Malta (1980 and 1986);

maritime patrol activities in the Strait of Tiran and Gulf of Aqaba (1982); minesweeping operations in the Gulf of Suez (1984) and Persian Gulf (1987) and of course participation in the Persian Gulf war with Iraq in 1991.

They also helped organize the Pentagonal Group in 1989. All of these are examples of Italy's recent interest in becoming an active participant within the political sphere of European security. Italy's Foreign Minister, De Michelis, was the biggest, maybe the only, Italian advocate of interjecting an Italian foreign policy. At the present time Italy is without a controlling cabinet and De Michelis lost his job after the April, 1992 elections.

Within this emerging era of European security, Italians see an opportunity to finally be a significant player. They see this new era as one based upon economic and political strength vice a military one. Italy has had a rapport with both North Africa and the former Soviet Union. Their position is unique, possibly unique enough for them to emerge as strong future negotiators in North-South as well as East-West dialogues.

It may be hard for Americans to see the significance of the Mediterranean region. They don't see the Mediterranean as a strategic entity in it's own right. Many Europeans in the Southern Flank, such as the Italians and the Spanish view the Mediterranean in a strategic sense. During most of the Cold

War, this area was thought of as subsidiary to the conflict on the Central Front, and the Central Region of NATO.

What is argued here is that what has happened over the last 2 years in the transformation of East-West relations has made the Mediterranean a much more important region in strategic terms. This emerging importance can be classified in many different terms. [Ref. 24] First it is important in the traditional way. Since 1945 the Mediterranean has been an extension of the European security environment. The Italians have always contended that this body of water to Europe's south could be a security concern. Europeans are now more concerned about these perceived threats from the south.

The second way to look at the Mediterranean would be to consider it as the area where the Persian Gulf begins. The recent Gulf War experience has shown that logistically, as well as politically Southern Europe & Africa are linked in very real terms to what happens in the Middle East.

Another point when looking at the Mediterranean is to consider it an area of strategic consequence in it's own right. This is not so much a Mediterranean phenomena as it is a phenomena of the whole region and worthy of it being considered a separate security concern. When one looks from North Africa, the Balkans to the Middle East it becomes obvious that the whole area is ripe with recent conflict that demands a Mediterranean security policy.

Another observation is that constraints across this region by traditional superpowers have diminished. This can be seen in many countries like Iraq, Syria or even Israel where the kinds of constraints which existed in the height of the superpower conflict are gone. These nations, as well as others, have taken on a more adventurous role which could not have existed under superpower pressure. Iraq would not have been allowed to invade Kuwait, as an example while still under a strong Soviet influence.

Without superpower presence, the Mediterranean will become a center of residual military power. As military balance of power in Europe changes and the level of troop strength comes down and as countries in East Europe look for a peace divided, the whole level of military strength in the Southern periphery of the Mediterranean appears to be growing. These areas, most of which are outside the realm of the CFE Treaty, are heavily armed and its members are feeling more and more encircled by enemies. They are acquiring more capable systems including a strong interest in non-conventional weapons.

At the same time Italy & Europe look out across the spectrum of security issues that exist now they see this spectrum expanding rapidly. Where as during the Cold War, security perceptions were focused in Central Europe and on hard military issues now there is a concern over non-traditional aspects of security as well. These aspects

include economic, energy, migration as well as religious fundamentalism.

The refocusing on the Mediterranean has brought forward a number of regional initiatives. These initiatives, such as the pentagonal group or CSCM don't necessarily concern themselves strictly with military issues but also consider areas in which they feel linked such as economic development and political cooperation. The positive aspects of these groups are that they take countries which were not leading military powers and gives them an active political role thereby increasing their capabilities.

Both Italy and Spain have lobbied heavily for the success of these ambitious new groups. These ideas seek to bring together all areas of the mediterranean to discuss security issues and to create a synergistic consensus which brings understanding and stability to the region. Another observation is that the Iron Curtain is being reconstructed across the Mediterranean from East to West as a barrier. This barrier is to deal with radical Islamic fundamentalism, emigration and other security threats and may eventually take on a military character. Southern Europeans are concerned with military threats from North Africa as well as growing links between countries which are now discreet with political and ideological ties within North Africa or the Middle East.

There is also a certain fear from the south in regard to the north. They perceive a hostile north which is shutting

off the northern emigration and feel the Europeans intolerance may turn into a more threatening posture. The people in North Africa and the Mideast see the Europeans opening their internal borders while at the same time reinforcing their external ones. There is also fear of the Western European Union's military aspects. There is uncertainty by the south about what character this new European defense will have and what its position will be in regard to the regions south of the Mediterranean. So even here one can see a perceived belief that the former superpowers brought stability to the region.

When pushed to make a decision between a southern alliance such as CSCM, and an alliance based more on European participation, the Italians current posture will be to align with the European powers. The relations with the south will have to become secondary to the paramount, basic relationship to the European Community. The Italians are one of the strongest advocates of a unified Europe and as so must base alliance decisions on that position.

As an example, when the Middle East peace initiatives got going in Madrid in early 1992, Italian participation in CSCM was slowed because of some conflicts of position between the US and Europeans on one side, and CSCM policy on the other. Such moves by Italy demonstrate its current consensus that the southern initiatives may not be a viable alternative to European security.

Italy does not appear strong enough at the present to surmount its history of a weak foreign policy. Although they have had increased military participation in the recent past, their primary concern now is to focus on emerging stronger from the new European order and to fully and successfully integrate into it.

C. ITALIAN DEFENSE WHITE PAPER

A short discussion of Italy's new white paper is warranted. Italy has met the recent changes in European security by outlining a new 1992 defense white paper, the first since 1985. This proposal represents one of the first shifts away from Europe's dependence upon foreign military might. Although Italy still supports NATO's mission, it sees that Europeans will need to take a more autonomous role in European defense. Not to be left out, the Italians propose stepped up defense spending and a realignment of its command structure and composition of its forces. All this is aimed at transforming Italy from a security consumer to a security co-sponsor inside NATO and Europe. [Ref. 25] To help implement the plan, the Italian House Defense Committee passed a \$217 billion defense plan for this next year and is debating to fund a special bill for over \$287 billion more in the next ten years to modernize the Italian military. [Ref. 26] With the current political turmoil, and no

national government in Italy, these proposals are in a holding pattern.

It is here, as a co-sponsor of security, where Italy feels it has the opportunity to participate. Its internal political struggle has always kept Italy's military weak, defense interest low and Italian statecraft nonexistent. With the reduced local influence of the PCI, a stronger focus can now be put on building an effective and impressive defense. This new position is a positive one as the U.S. military presence in the Mediterranean proves harder and harder to maintain. This defense is not based upon pure military might. The Italians believe that southern flank interests are taking the form of more political dialogue instead of all military might. Again, here is where Italy feels it is unique enough to deal with the pressing issues such as arms control within the mediterranean region like no other European nation can. Gianni DeMichelis, Italy's former Foreign Minister, has made the US, as well as the Europeans, take notice of Italy's desire to be a full partner with his aggressive security proposals.

IV. THE NEW EUROPEAN SECURITY ORDER

A. NEW CHALLENGES

The "action-reaction" phenomena, where the East seemed to react to the West, appears to have shifted. Now the West must wait for the East to make a move and then react to it. Whether a European defense entity evolves from the WEU, EC, NATO or CSCE, it will be structured as a reaction to what will happen in the East. With the Union of Sovereign Republics unable to hold together and many East European nations on the ropes, it does not necessarily follow that peaceful democracy will prevail. Things will most likely get worse before they get better and it is not impossible to envision that this area has the ingredients for a fascist or national movement. The character of Eastern Europe and the future Soviet Union can not be defined in such a fluid environment. The West is really uncertain as to what reaction it must take.

The Soviet Union's breakup and the failing Communist Party are both having devastating results upon the Europeans as a whole. The wall which once divided East and West Europe has been torn down and after the great jubilation subsided, everyone realized that these stepchildren in the East are now more of a liability than first conceived. Of course, this all

comes at the worst time for the West because it too is facing terrible economic times. This has been the greatest reason for hesitation in fully embracing the East. The hesitation brings a contradiction because West Europeans have lamented for decades how the natural Europe has been divided and how much a unification would be welcomed. Even the Germans are straining under the cost of reunification. It is now apparent that the Iron Curtain is being replaced with an economic one. The West has been hesitant to open economic integration with the East for fear that the liabilities will surely outweigh the gains in such an undertaking. The West realizes now that the economic and environmental conditions of the East are worse than ever imagined.

The concerns are most certainly not unfounded. The problems facing the West from the East are indeed numerous and an open frontier policy may be unobtainable at the present time. Two of the biggest threats are the deteriorating Eastern alliances and military structure. In its wake it leaves economic turmoil, nuclear instability and unleashes regional conflict.

When Boris Yeltsin was asked about the current status of nuclear weapons in Russia he said that they are securing all of them they can find. Although most are within the Russian republic, nuclear weapons are also located in "breakaway" republics like the Ukraine and the Baltic States. Once severe hunger and desperation have manifested themselves, it could

only be a matter of time before these weapons might be used for blackmail, not just within the republics but also against outside areas. [Ref. 27] It is this continued strategic capability that has kept NATO's interest peaked. [Ref. 28] It becomes apparent that there is no other structure yet on line which can compete with NATO's present ability to deal with this strategic problem.

B. REGIONAL INSTABILITY

With Eastern Europe out from under Soviet control, ethnic and national passions have emerged as a serious destabilizing threat within this region, with the potential to spill over into neighboring areas.

Italy's strategic geography in relation to the Balkans has been proven to be a vulnerability. Yugoslavia and Albanian civil disturbances have created a sizeable refugee problem and constitutes an expanding threat to regional security that has yet to see its bounds. Italian planners are now concerned over the tide of both political and economic refugees across the Adriatic. In August of 1991 Italy's image as a land of tolerance was eroded when it turned tens of thousands of refugees around in the southern port of Bari and sent them back to their point of embarkation. [Ref. 29]

The worry, shared by other West Europeans is that the mass migration problem from the East will hurt their already sick economy. Italy's policy is to help these people within their

own country. The Italian Foreign Ministry explained that the new policy was to repatriate these individuals while also pledging millions of dollars in food aid. [Ref. 30] This will prove only to be a short term solution to a major ethnic problem that is indicative of Eastern Europe. The EC has offered billions of dollars in aid to Yugoslavia but money doesn't appear to be stopping the unrest. Fighting still continues and the EC delegation has been unable to entice a cease-fire. At least a dozen EC sponsored cease-fires have broken down. Although Yugoslavia has provided a very tough baptism by fire, the Europeans have not made an effective showing on their first real attempt at solving their own problems within Europe.

C. ITALY'S NEW ROLE IN THE SOUTHERN FLANK

Although detente has brought tension down, there are significant challenges to deal with which cause immediate refocus and great concern. For Italy, as well as other Southern European nations, the relaxed tension on the East-West front has brought renewed tension regarding the southern threat. This, of course, comes at a bad time when most countries can ill afford increased defense and when the decreased tension in Central Europe dictates public support of decreased military power. Coupled to this is a decrease in U.S. Naval forces in the Mediterranean and it appears that the

U.S. will have continued difficulty sustaining future deployments. Unfortunately, arsenals in North Africa and the Mid East have no such constraints and in fact are growing with modern chemical and ballistic missile technology.

The reduced tensions have caused asymmetrical force reductions throughout the northern area do not appear to be an appropriate answer for in the Mediterranean region. A strong military presence may be required to deal with these threats in the short term. In reality, these southern threats have long been growing and were only unrecognizable behind the conflict in the north and the Atlantic Alliance's priority to it.

Italian security policy is shaped by its alliance role and its geopolitical position. Italy has two fronts. First, Italy has a continental dimension by being one of the southern nations within Europe. On the other front, with its strong cultural and economic links to the south, it plays the role of a northern power within North Africa and the Middle East region. One might say that Italy is the "gate keeper" for both of these regions; a most difficult position to hold.

Italy divides the mediterranean into two geopolitically separate areas. The western basin has enjoyed a somewhat stable period. The Strait of Gibraltar is kept secure by the British, French, Spanish, and US interest. In contrast, the eastern basin is marked by many tensions. The Arab Israeli conflict comes to the forefront, but there are more immediate

threats to stability in the region such as nuclear proliferation and the spread of ballistic missile technology. Iraq is now being watched even closer than Iran was, Islamic fundamentalism is on the rise, and there is still Greek-Turkish animosity.

The internal political, social and economic tensions in this southeast region have made it the number one threat to peace and a major focus since the fall of the Soviet Union. The Northern Europeans are enjoying a break in the tension. They see their defense efforts paying off and now appear more concerned with the debate over what type of new security entity should best be employed. Europe's southern region is not as homogeneous nor secure as the North Central region. The southern flank is varied and its cohesion has been built by predominantly bilateral agreements with the United States.

This bilateral first, NATO second, EC and WEU third, security policy has marked southern flank politics since 1949. The south never had the same cohesion which was shared in the north. This has also been Italy's history but there seems to be a fundamental change which might be leading Italy to surmount its historic conditions and take a leading role in developing a Southern flank security policy which is more multilateral. The Italians believe that greater stability among the North Central Europeans will lead to greater exposure to threats in the South. De Michelis saw Italy moving into the position the US has held as a catalyst for

strategic cohesion and understanding in the southern area. Their recent political, as well as military, participation may be an indication of their ability to do this.

D. EMERGING ITALIAN ASSERTIVENESS

If ever there was a proper niche for Italian participation in foreign affairs it would be in the Mediterranean. Italy has looked south in the past decades not so much as a security concern, but for economic reasons. The Italians import 90% of their energy supplies with a majority coming from Arab States such as Libya and Algeria. [Ref. 31] The significant vulnerability associated with these crucial commodities has turned an economic issue into a political one. Italy, more than any other European country, has a strong rapport in the region from dealing with these Southern Mediterranean neighbors. This has resulted in a growing assertiveness by Italy regarding the recent threats in the Mediterranean region.

There has been a marked increase in foreign involvement by Italians in the last couple of decades. Many went unnoticed by the other western powers but they were indeed important steps forward in Italy's quest for a larger role in foreign affairs. Prominent examples of participation were Italy's involvement in UNIFIL (1979); the agreements for economic, technical and military assistance with Malta (1980 & 1986); maritime patrol activities in the straight of Tiran and Gulf

of Aqaba (1982-1984); minesweeping operations in the Gulf of Suez (1984) and Persian Gulf (1987). [Ref. 32] All of these ventures are noticeably in the South and are examples of Italy's possible resolve to become involved in the North-South defense. [Ref. 33]

The decade that followed brought Italy's military out of dormancy and projected it into an assertive foreign role. In July of 1979 Italian troops were part of a U.N. contingent in Southern Lebanon (UNIFIL). In September 1980 Italy's foreign minister was successful in negotiating a guarantee for Maltese neutrality. With the guarantee came economic and military assistance. Italy's most significant extraterritorial military action up to that point came in 1982 with the Beirut peacekeeping mission and the maritime patrol activities in the Strait of Tiran and Gulf of Aqaba. Later in 1984, Italy, at the request of the Egyptian government, sent minesweepers to help clear the Gulf of Suez. [Ref. 34]

Although thought of as a token gesture by other Europeans, Italy's role in the Persian Gulf War with Iraq in 1991 was extensive for Italy and was another step forward in Italy's quest for a prominent role in security issues. Italy contributed to the tense action with ten Tornado attack aircraft and five warships. It was important for Italy to demonstrate that it could rise to the threat and show quick response. Participation also created a great sense of national pride. All of these examples of assertive action are

both significant and indicative when viewed within Italy's historical posture of passiveness.

The events are seen by many as Italy's ability to surmount its conditions of the past and seek a larger role in foreign policy. [Ref. 35]

Italy was also a major organizer of the Pentagonal group in 1989. This group; Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria and Italy meet to discuss mutual political trends, immigration and security issues. Although the Yugoslav conflict has caused some dormancy within the group, it is a good example of the resolve by southern countries to develop an alliance which was not based upon military issues nor superpower involvement. Italy also advocated a proposal to extend CSCE security guarantees to the Mediterranean. Italy brought nine nations together on 23 March 1990 in Rome which set the stage for a CSCE conference at Palma de Majorca in October 1990. This could be seen as Italy's attempt to counter it's fear of being isolated from Central Europe security. [Ref. 36]

Italy's uniqueness lies in its geopolitical position in the Mediterranean. It has a history of positive contact with a multitude of client nations and a successful record of economic negotiations. With their previously mentioned relationship in Central & East Europe, coupled with their Mediterranean expertise, they would be a strong candidate to emerge as a leader in North-South negotiations. They

negotiate with an economic slant but with the political war of ideology over, this may prove to be what is needed.

E. ITALIAN SECURITY POLICY IN TRANSITION

The handling of the Yugoslav problem is proving to be a major failure for the EC. Although the Yugoslavian civil war represents a tough baptism by fire, the Europeans have not made an effective policy for dealing with this problem in their own backyard. More than a dozen EC sponsored cease-fires have failed to stop the bloodshed. Where Italy's geographic position has been an asset for NATO, it has been a liability with the Balkans. Yugoslavian and Albanian civil disturbances have created a refugee problem for Italy. The Italians have two policies in their approach to stem the flow. They are turning the refugees around and shipping them back while at the same time sending financial aid to help deal with this problem at its origin. [Ref. 37] Italy has continued economic ties with the South and is very sensitive to security in the region. Relaxed East-West tensions are allowing the US to scale down its forces in Europe. Reductions in the Navy's Sixth Fleet will put added stress upon the Mediterranean situation. Gapped deployments of carrier battle groups in the Mediterranean will show the Italians that US force projection and presence are diminishing. The Italians noticed with great interest that during the Gulf War the US pulled its carriers from the

Mediterranean to reinforce Persian Gulf assets. The military arsenals in North Africa and the Mid-East are at this same time growing. Italy fears that the dismantling of the NATO forces in Europe may be hasty, as first, a full analysis of the Mediterranean threat needs to be addressed.

Italians have long felt that most Franco-German defense policies downplay the southern threat and they feel they may be isolated by these northern Europeans. This is why Italy's Foreign Minister, De Michelis, has advocated a policy that includes both a strong Pan-European defense entity as well as keeping NATO alive and involved. [Ref. 38] He also supports efforts to unite the Middle East, North Africa and Southern Europe in a cohesive alliance.

Italy appears to be in a transition period in regard to security policy. The Italians have been willing to take more assertive action. Italy seems better informed and shows some autonomous defense expertise for the first time. The 1979 INF decision sparked a little informal debate by some experts and brought about some previously unseen inquisitiveness by the Italian public. Two years earlier, the 1977 Italian White Paper only devoted one page to nuclear issues. Although the public's sensitivity was stimulated, the debates ended with Italy once again aligning with the United States and the rest of Europe.

V. CONCLUSION

Italian security policy has been defined as a loyal alliance to NATO and the EC. These two pillars have brought security and some stability to an Italy previously unable to properly develop because of an ineffective government. The Italians appear to have surmounted their weak historical conditions and are maturing rapidly toward a European country which demands a leadership role consistent with its economic strength. The uncharacteristic military and political action in which Italy has recently been involved in has demonstrated its resolve to be a more active participant.

With regard to Franco-German proposals for a new European Army, this could serve to bring about even more debate between European leaders. The Franco-German proposal to expand the existing Franco-German brigade and reduce the role for the United States broadens the divide between pro-NATO Britain and Italy and the European Community backers such as France. Although both Italy and Britain are not totally convinced of a pan-European defense without US support, they arrive at the same conclusions for different reasons.

The Italians have always been strong NATO supporters relying heavily upon the U.S. for its domestic defense. NATO still represents the fundamental reference point for military security. They also are skeptical of security policy and

defense based in the North, feeling that it will not be sensitive to the threats of the southern flank. With the growing Southern Mediterranean and Middle East threats, Italy sees itself as uniquely qualified to take a leading role in developing security policy within the new European order. The British see the new security proposals as a possible threat to their national sovereignty. They do not embrace a dilution of current British power in the foreign affairs arena and reject any ideas of losing authority over their nuclear arsenal or diminished US participation.

An Anglo-Italian defense proposal emerged in October of 1991 which delegated some regional military responsibility to the nine nation Western European Union. The basic difference here is that unlike the Franco-German proposals which brings the WEU under EC control, the Anglo-Italian initiative leaves major political decisions about European security with NATO. Paris has continually criticized the proposal because it leaves too much power with NATO.

Because of a current NATO charter which restricts out-of-area military response, Britain, Italy and the US may support the Franco-German proposal if it would cover out-of-area crises. This, of course, may be too difficult to materialize because of both German and French resistance to fight outside their sovereign territories. This fundamental impasse will surely block forward movement with any proposal until a compromise is found. While all the debating continues, Italy

is moving forward with its own plans for increased defense and is unilaterally moving toward a defense plan for the Mediterranean.

Italy's Foreign Minister, along with those of Egypt and Greece, have set the foundation for an eastern Mediterranean security arrangement. These foreign ministers said this new forum, similar to the Conference for Security and Cooperation of the Mediterranean would open its membership to include Middle Eastern nations which have outlets to the Mediterranean Sea. [Ref. 39]

Antonios Samaras, Greek Foreign Minister, spoke positively of the negotiations and said the Greek objective was to involve Turkey and Cyprus and was interested in promoting stability in the Aegean. Early Arab statements appear promising with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa promoting the establishment of confidence-building and arms control measures. Their biggest concern is weapons of mass destruction. Italy's interest in establishing this arena was due to France's resistance to expanding the Conference for Security and Cooperation of the Mediterranean to include some eastern Mediterranean nations. The CSCM includes Spain, France, Portugal, Italy, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya.

Although economic integration is moving forward, it will be harder now to keep Europeans linked in the area of security. Keeping Europe and the US coupled over security

threats will not be easy. The problem of strategic "coupling" has always been complex in the Southern flank. It was important to try to assure the credibility of the deterrence across the Atlantic but also to keep North and South Europe linked. With the major threat in North Central Europe diminished, it will be even harder to keep the north and south united. The problem will be "fragmentation" in approaches to security by Southern flank nations which see the North as insensitive to the southern threats. Italy has already embarked upon a regional security plan for the Mediterranean. If fragmentation occurs, it will need a center, a common strength. This center stability may be the long standing cooperation which has endured within NATO.

Taken together with the risks in North Africa and the Middle East, it is clear that many threats to Europe will come from the South. Being that most of this region is out-of-area for NATO, it may be imperative that NATO adopt a more relevant position. This will help NATO be responsive to a range of issues which were previously outside their traditional security realm.

Italian leadership sees the new European order based on political and economic power and not necessarily on military might. The Italians see themselves as uniquely able to handle major security negotiations in the Southern region. They have overcome their own self doubts and the task before them is to convince other Europeans that Italy commands their attention.

With regard to Italy's relationship with the US, Italians still see the US as a counter-balance to the emerging strength of Britain, Germany and France. The U.S. gives Italy both a nuclear and Mediterranean guarantee which may not come from a Franco-German derived defense umbrella. Italy's current posture would lead to the conclusion that it still considers the NATO alliance primary. If Italy feels the South may be isolated by an insensitive North and will continue to propose Southern region security. Of course at the time of this writing, Italy's government is undergoing yet another complete change of its ruling cabinet. There is a certain stability in Italy's unstable government. Although governments come and go, Italy stands as a very stable ally for both the US and its European neighbors. Italy may just emerge unique enough to lead the Mediterranean countries into a Southern Alliance while still being an integral part of a new European defense organization.

APPENDIX. CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

- 1945..... Mussolini captured and executed; World War II ends in Italy; abdication of King Victor Emmanuel III
- 1946..... Establishment of the Italian Republic; formation of government of national unity which joins Christian Democrats, Socialists, and Communists
- 1947..... Communists and Socialists parties ejected from controlling government
- 1948..... New republican Constitution goes into effect; first parliamentary election produces major Christian Democratic victory; Marshall plan implemented
- 1949..... Formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization with Italy as a charter member
- 1952..... Italy joins the European Coal and Steel Community
- 1956-59.... Communists and Socialists diverge; Communists announce program of a "Italian path to socialism"

- 1968-69... Emergence of student and labor unrest; terrorist violence breaks out
- 1973..... Communists propose the "historic compromise"
- 1975..... Socialist withdraw from center-left coalition
- 1976..... Christian Democrats form a government dependent on Communist abstention; Communists receive several parliamentary seats
- 1979..... Communists withdraw from parliamentary majority, bringing down the government
- 1980..... Socialists join the government which recreates the center-left coalition
- 1983..... Bettino Craxi, a Socialist, forms a government, the first postwar government lead by a non-Christian Democrat
- 1985..... Craxi government falls
- 1991..... Italy's defense forces participate with a coalition in the Gulf War

1992..... In January, Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis suggests a leading role for Italy in a pan-European defense force; April elections bring down national government, Italy is without a controlling cabinet again

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